

# Indiana House of Representatives

## News and Information

*Media Office*

*Democratic Caucus*

*John Schorg, Director*

*Statehouse, Room 157*

*Indianapolis, Indiana 46204*

*1-800-382-9842 or 1-317-232-9621*

*Fax Number: 1-317-232-9792*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**March 2, 2005**

### **BAUER: FIRST HALF OF 2005 SESSION A SUCCESS, BOTH IN WHAT DID AND DIDN'T PASS**

INDIANAPOLIS – Indiana House Democrat Leader B. Patrick Bauer (D-South Bend) said the first half of the 2005 session of the Indiana General Assembly has been a success, both in terms of accomplishments and in blocking legislation that would have taken away the rights of Hoosiers.

"By taking the time to look at the first two months of the 2005 session, we can see that there were a number of achievements," Bauer said. "House members did fulfill their obligation under the Indiana Constitution to pass a biennial state budget, although the version of House Bill 1001 is less than perfect because it will cut funding for schools and raise property taxes for many homeowners."

He also praised legislation to speed up creation of the Indiana Economic Development Corporation to oversee job creation efforts (House Bill 1003), extend the life of the earned income tax credit that provides tax relief to working Hoosiers who need it the most (HB 1083), provide a way to secure funding to complete critical state and local road projects (HB 1729) and start a Department of Agriculture to meet the needs of farmers and rural communities (HB 1008).

"These four bills are examples of the bipartisan cooperation that took place over the first two months of this session, a time period in which House members approved 117 bills," Bauer said. "It is a shame that partisanship and inept management created a situation where representatives were forced to consider more than 130 bills in a single day, many of which caused serious concerns among House Democrats because they took away valued rights from Hoosiers."

Among the bills causing those worries is House Bill 1002, which would formally create the post of inspector general, an official appointed by the governor who would have the ability to take over prosecution of local criminal cases from elected county prosecutors. While praising the idea of an inspector general to look into fraud and corruption, Bauer said the person in that role would have abilities that violate separation of powers provisions in the Indiana Constitution.

"The inspector general will be able to override the authority of elected county prosecutors, change venues for those he prosecutes, issue subpoenas and empanel grand juries," Bauer said. "In short, this person who is appointed by the governor would have greater power than the Indiana Attorney General or a local prosecutor, both of whom are elected by the voters. The only accountability that an inspector general would have would be to the governor."

In addition, Bauer said House Democrats raised concerns about House Bill 1439, a "voter identification" proposal designed to intimidate seniors, minorities and those on lower incomes from exercising their right to vote.

"This bill would set up situations in Indiana similar to that in Ohio, where voters had to wait for hours to cast a ballot, simply to comply with voter ID requirements," Bauer said. "Thanks to voter identification, it was easier to vote in Iraq than Ohio. Is that the message we should be sending to encourage people to take part in the electoral process?"

"Two months remain in the 2005 session, and while these bill numbers are dead, the concepts contained in them remain alive," he added. "There is still time to debate the merits of these proposals, correct their flaws and pass them into law before the end of this session. House Democrats stand ready to achieve that goal."

---30---

**This news release can be accessed on the Internet at [www.IN.gov/H06](http://www.IN.gov/H06)**